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WHY DO YOU CALL
THEM POLKA DOTS

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Why do You Call Them POLKA DOTS ?

WHY *do* you call them Polka Dots? Because a Bohemian peasant girl was a good dancer and a certain very popular man was elected President of the United States.

And this is how it happened.

Back in the early days of the 19th century, a year or two before Cheney Brothers came into existence as silk manufacturers, a man named Neruda, an Hungarian dancing professor, was traveling through Bohemia near to the Polish border. Alighting from his coach at a little obscure town, Neruda noticed a peasant girl singing and dancing what, to him, was a new step, so he watched her, memorized her dance, took it back to Prague, and introduced it there under the name of Polka which, by

the way, is the feminine of Polak or Pole—this was in 1835.

The new dance soon spread to Vienna where it was exceedingly popular as early as 1839.

Celarius, another famous dancing master, introduced it to Paris at the Odeon in 1840, where it took the public by storm.

From Paris it spread to England.

And now comes the most interesting part of the story. In 1844, two years after the Polka reached London, James K. Polk was run-

ning for the Presidency of the United States and it was during his presidential campaign that the Polka was introduced into the United States. "Polk" and "Polka"—the two together made an instant appeal to the American imagination, the dance becoming immediately popular. Its likeness to the name of the incoming President rendered it probably more popular than it would have been otherwise and the "new dance" swept the country.

Realizing the trade possibilities offered by the connection of the President's name with this "novel" and popular dance, merchants, manufacturers and designers began immediately to trade on the coincidence.

So, in the early issues of "Godey's Lady Book", we find Polka Hats and Polka Shoes, Polka Gauze and the "next design in fabrics for gentlewomen" — the Polka Dot.

Now "Godey's Lady Book" was an American magazine and talked real

United States English, in contrast to which we find our British cousins calling what we term Polka Dots, Spotted Designs, or simply "Spots", while the French have always known them as "Quinconce".

Thus, you see, "Polka Dot" is purely an American name, having its origin in a popular fad and National politics—typical, isn't it?

But back of this seemingly trivial incident lies something of more than ordinary interest to those who make or sell or wear silken fabrics.

For, of all the various articles and designs that our grandmother's mothers knew as "Polka", but one has survived—the Polka Dot.

Why is this so?

Because the Polka Dot is founded on a principle basically correct—the pleasing design effect of spots imposed at proper intervals upon a background of contrasting color. The shape of the spots and their colors have no part in it. As a matter of fact, although we have come to associate Polka Dots with

round spots it is the artistic principle involved in the spacing and contrast that determines their attractiveness.

Indeed, if other shapes in design had been the vogue in those days, the original "Polka Dots" might have been square, triangular, hexagonal or entirely irregular in outline instead of round, and still have been called Polka Dots, and they would have been just as lastingly popular because they followed the same basic principle.

Taking advantage of the principle involved, Cheney Brothers have originated designs for Spring and Summer that show a distinctly pleasing departure from the rather staid "Polka Dot" but which because they are basically the same, so far as correctness of principle is involved, should make an instant appeal to tasteful women the country over. This fact lends added interest to the new Cheney Showerproof Foulards, and Cheney Cinderella, an interest founded on established popularity and unusual saleability.

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